

POLISH ART EXHIBITION OPENS AT ART CENTER ROOMS TODAY; MINISTER WROBLEWSKI, BENDA AND OTHER NOTABLES TO AID

MAGAZINE ARTIST WILL SHOW MANY PANELS AT EXHIBIT

Peasant Crafts Take Place of Honor at Showing in Connecticut Avenue Hall—Officials of Legation Will Receive—Visitors Have Opportunity to Gain Excellent Picture of Daily Life in Europe's Newest Nation.

By VIKTOR FLAMBEAU.

AL the way across the sea from far-away Poland a new exhibition has come to the Art Center—Polish Arts and Industries of today, with a glimpse at history, architecture, great men and women, old cities, quaint scenes of country life, the children's dolls and other toys, the story of the fine arts.

At the same time Wladyslaw Benda, a great Polish artist whom we also claim as American, has lent twelve of his large panel pictures for the exposition from his country. Mr. Benda, who has never before exhibited in Washington, came from Poznan, in the west of Poland. He has a studio in New York and is widely known as a painter and illustrator.

But that is not all the attraction of this new Polish exposition, which opens today at the Art Center, 110 Connecticut avenue northwest, for the new minister of Poland and Madame Wroblewski have lent their patronage to the event, and they will receive, with other members of the legation, including the Counselor and Madame Kwapińska, as well as the secretary, Dr. Sokolowski, all of whom are art collectors, and keenly interested in the new revival of the arts in Poland.

Admission will be free, as usual, to the Art Center and the tea, but on account of the expense of assembling this rare collection, there will be a small admission charge to the gallery.

POLAND TODAY.

Probably the real students will begin by studying the maps, one of Poland itself as a country, and another of Europe as a whole, showing just how this new and progressive country of between twenty-five and thirty million inhabitants and an area of roughly 150,000 square miles is sandwiched in between Germany on one side, and on the other Russia, with Ruthenia and the Ukraine, while on the south it borders Czechoslovakia and Rumania, and on the north East Prussia and Lithuania. A grand country now, Poland, with the fine seaport of Danzig on the Baltic.

Poland ranks sixth in population among the nations of Europe, and only twelfth in density of population, a happy comparison, as it leaves so much room for growing. It is even predicted that in fifty years Poland will surpass in numbers every country of Europe except perhaps Russia, Germany and England. That it is now a wonderfully wide-awake and progressive nation no one can doubt, especially if he has actually visited Poland, where Viktor Flambeau was so delightfully entertained in his long tour.

But it is more than a lesson in geography to visit this little show, gathered from so many cities of Poland, Cracow, Warsaw, Vilna, ever so many more, besides the country districts where they make the queer peasant toys, always with a touch of strangeness and originality, for the Poles are great artists. The old-fashioned native costumes are illustrated in one series of dolls, country boys and girls, figures so fantastic that they fascinate the older people as well as the children.

WHOLE MENAGERIE.

Then there's a whole menagerie of animals carved in wood and painted with lifelike naturalness, the lion, tiger, elephant, camel and rider, besides a farmyard of chickens, cows and ducks, with a nice little hopping rabbit, a moo-cow, a pert little dog that almost barks, and two wooden peacocks, gayly decorated. There are some wooden serpents that the youngsters would like to run away with, and several figurines, so beautifully carved and colored that they are true works of art.

Yet this was what a leading American encyclopedia said of Poland only ten years ago, an authoritative work, the New International:

"POLAND—A former kingdom of Europe, whose territory is now included in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Prussia."

But nations, like people, sometimes have a new birth, and it is upon a renaissance, no doubt the greatest in its history, that Poland is now entering. One sign of it is this new exposition, just opening in Washington, to the surprise of which so many Poles

THE Polish Art exhibition, which opens at the Art Center today, will be, Flambeau says, something well worth witnessing. Here are shown, at the top, Laszcka's "Polish Mountaineer," and Jarocki's "Peasant Girls." The large picture is of the Cathedral at Warsaw, by Jablonski, and the art work at the left is "A Polish Peasant Girl," by Laszcka. The photograph, at the right, is of Miss E. Bialonowska, who is assisting with the exhibit.



and friends of Poland have contributed.

For those interested to learn a bit of the real history of this newborn country, there is almost a tiny library of authoritative and



recent publications, beautifully illustrated, which may be consulted and studied by visitors, and many of the larger pictures have been artistically arranged for display. The most famous of Polish painters, Jan Matejko, has forty portraits in color of the Kings of Poland, with one Queen, dating from 1310 to 1798. Five of the monarchs of the later period abdicated, which suggests the uncertainties of their position, and the Queen Jadwiga, or Hedwige, was crowned in 1384, married in 1386, and then succeeded by King Ladislaus II, or Jagiello, though she lived until 1399.

PAINTED MANY KINGS.

A glimpse of Matejko's great industry as a painter is gained from the fact that he made 300 portraits of kings, queens, priests and others, besides a picture of the artist and his family. These are preserved in an album at the exhibition. Every great gallery in Poland claims a more or less famous Matejko, usually immense canvases, brilliant in color. Many of them celebrate Polish military triumphs of history. Still a third album of Matejko and other painters of Poland in our Washington exhibition gives us glimpses of these great canvases, including the more modern Kossak, who is also represented in another group of "Mansions and Palaces in Greater Poland."

While the present exhibition is by no means representative of Poland's great art, still it gives a general and comprehensive view of the leaders in art, in history, and in affairs of today. "Mansions and Palaces in Greater Poland" is the subject of an illustrated publication with several of Kossak's pictures, and another on the "Polish Museum" contains a collection of sixty-four photographs of Polish sculptures of fourteenth century Gothic buildings, Byzantine art in Poland, and early printshops and woodcuts. "The Jewels of Cracow" contains rotogravures of the Royal Palace, the Cathedral, and other important subjects of that ancient city, the former capital of Poland. The handicrafts of this region are also illustrated in designs of the "Embroidery of the Cracow People," for handkerchiefs, laces, insertions, which date from the sixteenth century.

POLISH SCENES.

"Summer Resorts and Health Resorts" are featured in another, with pictures and descriptions of various tours in Poland. There are also books and pamphlets of picturesque or otherwise important regions of Poland, for example, the Tatra mountains, Vilna, Poznan, Warsaw, an illustrated volume called "The Land," with reproductions of archaeology, architecture, historical and art relics, portraits and maps, besides a "Geography of the Land of Old Poland," with 204 pictures and 48

maps. "Polish Life in Former Centuries," with 241 reproductions, some of them in color, shows types of mansions, castles, and costumes. One of the books on Vilna, considered of special interest, is an authoritative work by the Germans during their occupation there.

A series of Peter Stachiewicz's pictures, in reproduction, presents the "Five Senses," prefigured as "Accord," "Inebriating Fragrance," "Grapes," "The Kiss," and "The Aesthete." Two books on Polish "Art" have an introduction in English. "Popular Stained Glass Art," from the vicinity of the Tatra mountains, is also a striking collection.

Another art publication contains seventeen reproductions of Jacek Malczewski's compositions, among

them "The Fisherman," "The Angel and the Shepherd," "Doubting Thomas," "The Prayer," "The Return" and "Art."

BENDA COMING.

The large exhibition of Polish painting, sculpture and the folk arts, which was invited last summer by The Washington Times-Herald, through Viktor Flambeau, when he visited central Europe, bearing letters also from the Art and Archaeology League, will arrive later, perhaps next fall, but in the meantime this preliminary showing is well worth study, and will make the big one far more intelligible. Many Polish Americans and friends of Poland have assisted in assembling the present exposition, which contains a number of canvases by real Polish artists, besides the imaginative

themes of Benda's twelve panels, shown for the first time in Washington.

Mr. Benda, who is an exceedingly busy and successful mural painter, is coming to Washington himself to assist in the present display, and will probably be a guest of honor next Sunday, as he was unable to arrive for this opening today. He has in New York a charming studio at 1 Gramercy Park, with an aesthetic atmosphere almost Oriental in character. He is widely known as a decorative painter, and also for his illustration in "Hearst's" and the "Cosmopolitan," as well as in many books, one of which, "The Comedian," was a recent translation from the Polish. He became an American citizen a little more than ten years ago, having come

ARTISTS OF POLAND HAVE WON HONORS IN MANY COUNTRIES

All Opposed Exhibition Here Unless It Were Well Done—Present Event Preliminary to Larger Exhibition Which Will Be Held Later, In Accordance With Arrangements Made by Flambeau While In Europe.

to this country in 1899. In 1920 he married Miss Campfield, of New York.

Born in Poznan, Poland, in 1873, Wladyslaw Theodor Benda, as he was christened, was the son of Jan Benda, a pianist and composer. His mother was Ksawera Sikorska Benda.

"MUST BE WELL DONE."

He showed an early predilection for art, and was trained in the school of technology and the Academy of Art of Cracow. Later he studied in the art schools of Vienna, of San Francisco and New York. He is a member of the Archaeological League of America, the Society of Illustrators and the Mural Painters, besides the Players Club. In the Pan-Pacific Exposition of San Francisco, 1915, Benda was awarded a silver medal.

When Viktor Flambeau visited

with explanations in English, will be one of the evening entertainments. A concert of Polish selections by Polish musicians will be another interesting occasion, arranged by Prof. W. M. Kneblewski, J. C. L., now of the Catholic University staff. Father Kneblewski, who has come to America as a representative of the Polish University of Lublin, is a publicist and correspondent of the leading Warsaw and Lublin newspapers, and was formerly editor of the "Kurier Czeszochowski," or "Courier of Czeszochowski," or "western Poland. He has lent two interesting canvases by the Polish painter, K. Kietlicz Rayski, of Polish mountain types from the Tatra and Carpathian Mountains, and has also been instrumental in bringing other paintings in this exhibition.

FLAMBEAU'S "PLUNDER."

Besides the other things, there's a whole corner of plunder that Flambeau brought back from those gracious friends who entertained him so royally in Cracow, Warsaw, and Vilna, and some pictures which he purchased for himself here and there. The Polish money, all in paper, was acquired at the rate of 8,500 Polish marks to the dollar.

From Cracow Prof. Franciszek Janczyk, editor of "Wianki," a very modern Polish art review, has sent a complete series of his magazine, which he began to publish immediately at the close of hostilities. Mr. Janczyk had about \$800 in cash, so he told Flambeau, a small fortune in Poland at the present rate of exchange, and he wished to do something patriotic for his country. He had served as an officer in the Polish army, and he wished to aid in the reconstruction of free Poland, so he decided to found an art magazine, since his own tastes were strongly in that direction. He had the assistance of his brother, Alexander Janczyk, a Polish painter, and of other artistic friends. Of the success of his venture, from the art point of view, no one can doubt who examines the eight or ten copies on exhibition, picturing some of the latest Polish works.

From Warsaw Flambeau brought a rather extensive series of door prints, reproductions of the great Polish painters, and a miscellaneous group of other photographs and pictures, one of which is a charming little nocturne of the river Vistula at evening, by a woman artist, Stefania Auleytnier, who has a studio in Warsaw, and whose painting Flambeau selected from an exhibition at the big National Gallery. Two sketches, one of them quite brilliant, are by a Polish art student of only eighteen, who had already served with the Polish army, which he ran away from home to join during the war. A sunset scene in oil is by Madame Felicyja Czajkowska, who entertained Flambeau at lunch in Warsaw and presented him with her charming study. She is much interested in the United States, which she hopes soon to visit.

"LUD-POLS" TOYS.

Another leading Polish literary and art review, "Krokwie," is also on display, published in Warsaw, where Flambeau had such a pleasant interview with one of its editors, Madame Janina Orzyńska, who is writing an article soon to appear in America, on "The Arts and Industries of Poland."

But probably the most "talking" thing from Warsaw is the little show of hand-painted toys and artistically decorated objects, jewel boxes and ornaments, from "Lud-Pols," as it is called, the "fabrik" or factory of Mr. Felix Stojanowski, who, with his attractive sister, was Flambeau's host one memorable afternoon, when he saw the orphan Polish children happily at work engaged in making these "folk-arts" for which Poland is so famous. If the American children see these fascinating toys, they will insist upon having a special ship-load sent over at once, as they will prefer them to toys from any other country. Several of these art objects were made by accomplished artists, whom Flambeau saw, hard at work, designing and executing the beautiful inlay figures which they do so well.

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